

THE
Dissenting Gentleman's
ANSWER

TO the REVEREND

Mr. *WHITE*'s
THREE LETTERS;

IN WHICH

A SEPARATION from the Establishment
is fully justified;

The Charge of SCHISM is refuted and retorted;

AND THE

CHURCH of *England* and the CHURCH of
JESUS CHRIST, are impartially compared, and found to
be CONSTITUTIONS of a quite DIFFERENT
NATURE.

*We desire to hear thee—*for as concerning THIS SECT,
we know that every where it is spoken against.

Acts xxviii. 22.

The THIRD EDITION.

BELFAST:

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the *Four-Corners*, M,DCC,XLVII.

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To the Reverend
MR. W. H. A. T. E. S.
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The Charge of Schism is refuted and returned;

AND THE
CHURCH of England and the CHURCH of
JESUS CHRIST, are mutually compared, and found to
be CONSTITUTIONS of a different
NATURE.

It appears to him that the Church of England is a
Church of men, and not a Church of God.
And he writes on

THIRD EDITION.

Printed by James Moore, in New Street, near
the Temple, M.DCCCLXXII.



THE
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Mr. WHITE's Three Letters, &c.

S I R,

A Debate of this kind I should not have *chose* in the present Situation of our publick Affairs: But as you have done me the Honour of publickly addressing to me *three* long Letters for my Conviction and Edification, Gratitude and good Manners *constrain* me to answer.

As *worldly* Considerations are very strong on your Side, I assure you, I have an Ear *always open* to any thing that can shew Conformity to be my Duty. *Dissenters* are not Men of so peculiar a Turn of Mind, as to love Suffering and Reproach, or to despise the Dignities, Preferments, and lucrative Posts, to the Amount of *Millions* a Year, which are shared amongst their Fellow-subjects, could they with a good Conscience partake of them, as they have a *natural Right* to do.

But, notwithstanding this Prejudice in Favour of your Argument, and all the Ingenuity with which you set it off, I cannot say it has wrought in me the Conviction you seemed to hope. So far, Sir, from this, that the more carefully I examine the Grounds of my *Separation*, the more thoroughly I am convinced of its Lawfulness and Expedience;

that 'tis a *Debt* I owe to *GOD*, to *Liberty*, to *Truth*, and an Act of Homage and Allegiance due to *CHRIST*, the *only* Law-giver and King in the Church.

I shall not enter upon the Enquiry, on which you largely expatiate, who are the *best Livers*, Churchmen or Dissenters? And amongst which the best Means for *holy living* are found? Let the World judge betwixt us. Would to *GOD* that both of us had greater Reason to boast!

The Controversy betwixt us, Sir, I apprehend may easily be brought to a *plain* and *short* Issue, if you will heartily join in it. It turns upon the *single Point* of the XXth Article of your Church, *viz.* *That THE CHURCH hath Power to decree Rites and Ceremonies, and Authority in Matters of Faith.* For if *THE CHURCH* hath really this Authority and Power, then all Objections of the Dissenters about Sponsors, the Cross in Baptism, kneeling at the Lord's-supper, and every other Thing, are impertinent and vain: *The Church* having this *Authority*, ought reverently to be obeyed. And, if instead of two or three Ceremonies, it had enjoined two or three score; and if to the *thirty-nine Articles* it had added an hundred besides, we ought meekly to have bowed down to her *spiritual Jurisdiction*, and to have practised and believed as *the Church* had taught and enjoined.

But, if on the contrary, Sir, *the Church* hath really and in Truth, no *Power at all*, nor *Authority* of this kind; yea, if *CHRIST*, the great *Law-giver* and *King* of the Church, hath expressly commanded that no *POWER* of this kind shall ever be *claimed*, or ever be *yielded*, by any of his Followers, then *your Church* is reprehensible and highly criminal before *GOD*, for usurping *this Power*: And then the *Dissenters* are justified, and will have Honour before *GOD*, for entering their Protest against such *Usurpation*; for asserting
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ing the Rights and Privileges of the Christian Church; and standing fast in the Liberty wherewith CHRIST has made them free.

Our Separation from the Establishment you are pleased to represent in very terrifying and black Colours, as a Sin of near the first Magnitude—"Our Ministers, you say, have Guilt lying heavily upon them on Account of their schismatical and uncatholick Proceedings.—They are notoriously peccant (*i. e.* are great Sinners) in throwing off the Authority of those whom they ought to obey and submit themselves to.—Their Conduct is such as you challenge all the Wit and Ingenuity of the Nation ever to reconcile with *holy Living*—You represent them as carnal, evil, and deceitful Workers, disorderly Walkers, whom God will, undoubtedly, for these Things, bring into Judgment *; and *the Faithful*, far from being permitted to enter into any *pastoral Relation* to them, are not permitted to have any *Christian Communion* with them; no, not so much as any *intimate unnecessary Acquaintance* and *Familiarity* with them in common Life †; with much more to the same Purpose.

You speak also "of the *Lay-dissenter*, as having stained his Soul with Guilt ‡; and of the Doctrine on which our Separation is built, as being *false* and *dangerous* ||. 'This you wish me to lay to Heart, and seriously to consider."

I have, according to your Wish, Sir, *lain it to Heart*, and *seriously considered*. The Result of my Consideration I shall now freely give you; and in return heartily wish, that laying aside all Prejudice and *worldly Attachments*, you would impartially consider—What is the true Nature and Constitution of the
Christian

* Letter I. Page 82, 83.

‡ Letter II. Page 26.

† Letter II. Page 8.

|| Letter III. Page 59.

Christian Church; and what the Allegiance, which, as a Subject of JESUS CHRIST, you owe to HIM the only Law-giver and King in the Church; who will shortly call you to Account for your Conduct in this Respect.

To come then to the Point—THE CHURCH you say, and solemnly subscribe it, *hath Power to decree Rites, and Authority in Matters of Faith*. This is the grand Hinge upon which the whole Controversy turns. Now here, Sir, let me ask you,

FIRST, *What CHURCH* is it, to whom this Authority and Power is given? You will, doubtless, say, the *Church of England*; for the *Church of England* expressly claims and exercises this Power; and you *avow* and *defend* it in this Exercise and Claim: Yea, this is the *very Basis* on which its whole Frame and Hierarchy stand. It obliges all its Ministers to subscribe to *Articles of Faith*, which it hath *authoritatively* decreed; and to use in religious Worship *Ceremonies* and *Rites*, which it hath *authoritatively* enjoined.

But mind, Sir, I beseech you, the Consequences of this Claim. If the *Church of England* hath really this Authority and Power; hath not the *Church of France*—the *Church of Spain*—the *Church of Rome* the very same? Hath *England*, in this Matter, any Privilege from God, any spiritual Prerogative, any Charter from Heaven, which its *neighbour Countries* have not? You will not pretend it has. But if it has *no* Privilege nor Prerogative of this kind, then the *Church of France*, and the *Church of Rome* have also, you acknowledge, *POWER to decree Rites and Ceremonies in God's Worship*, and *AUTHORITY in Points of Faith*; consequently, all the Fopperies and Superstitions of the *Romish Church*, at least, which cannot be proved to be contrary to the Word of God, are to be reverently

verently submitted to by all the Members of that Church, and cordially received.

But will not your claiming this Power for the *Church* absolutely overthrow the *Reformation* itself, and subvert the *very Foundation* of the Church you seek to establish? For till you can shew, why the *Church of England* is possessed of this Power, but not the *Church of Rome*; why a Body of acknowledged fallible Men in *Britain* have Authority to make and to enjoin Articles of Faith, but not a Body of pretended infallible Men at *Trent*; whence *ENGLAND* came thus spiritually-gifted, and endowed beyond all its *neighbour Kingdoms*—your Separation from the *Church of Rome* is incapable of a just and solid Defence.

To this, perhaps, you will reply—But *our Church* hath expressly guarded against any such *Abuse* of the Power it claims, by adding in the XXth Article—*Yet is it not lawful for the Church to ordain any Thing that is contrary to GOD's Word written; neither may it so expound one Place of Scripture that it be repugnant to another.* But, upon this, I entreat your Patience for these two Remarks:

1st, Whatever Ceremony or Rite then cannot be shewn to be CONTRARY to GOD's Word, your Church, yea, the *Church of Rome* hath, you acknowledge, full Authority to enjoin: Consequently, as *your Church*, by Virtue of this Authority, hath enjoined the *Cross in Baptism*, it hath full Power also to require you to *cross yourselves*, whenever you enter the Place of Worship, say your Prayers, look towards the East, touch the Bible, sit at Meat—It hath full Power to enjoin the Use of Salt and Spittle in *Baptism*, *Chrism*, *extreme Unction*, and an hundred other Things which are no more contrary to GOD's Word than the Cross in Baptism is.

As your Church now consecrates Ground, it has every

ty whit as much *Power* to consecrate the other *Element*, and to make *holy Water*, as well as *holy Earth*; and to order it to be decently sprinkled upon its Members (*for all Things, you know, are to be done decently and in Order*) in Token that they shall keep themselves pure from Sin: It hath *Power* to consecrate *holy Knives* to cut the sacramental Bread; *holy Basins* and *Ewers* for the Priests to wash in before the Sacrament, *holy Vestments and Robes*, and a great Variety of *holy Utensils*, lighted *Tapers* for the Altar, &c. (all which, you know, Sir, was done by your admired Bishop *Laud*) knocking on the Breast, bowing towards the East, Prostration before the Altar.—All these, I say, and innumerable other Ceremonies *your Church* claims *Authority* and *Power* to enjoin; for none of these can be shewn to be more *contrary to the Word of God*, or to be a whit more superstitious, ridiculous, or absurd, than the *crossing* at Baptism, or the *solemn Consecration* of Churches and their Yards. But,

2dly. The *Limitation* or *Guard*, which the Article seems to put upon *this Power* of the Church, is really of no Force, and amounts to nothing at all.

For tho' it says—That the Church *may not ordain any Thing CONTRARY to GOD's Word, nor so expound one Scripture as to be REPUGNANT to another*: Yet of this *Repugnance* and *Contrariety*, the CHURCH alone, you will observe, and not every *private Person*, is allowed to be the proper *Judge*: For else the Article is absurd; it actually overthrows itself; and takes away, with one Hand, what it gives with the other. For, if every *private Person* hath Authority to judge of the Church's Decisions, and to *reject* them, if they appear to him repugnant to Scripture, then the *Church's Authority* in Points of Faith comes to just nothing at all. It is an Authority to decree, where none are bound to submit; that is, an Authority over no Body, an Authority

Authority to do nothing. But such a senseless, unmeaning, impertinent Claim, can never be the Design and Import of *this Article*. It does claim therefore for the Church some *real Authority* to settle Points of Faith; consequently, to Points thus *authoritatively* settled by it, private Christians, its Members are, reverently to submit, even tho' to their own Judgments they appear repugnant to the Word of God.

This, Sir, must be the real Meaning and Intent of the Article, notwithstanding the *restrictive Clause*. Accordingly, in Consequence of this Claim, your Church hath *authoritatively* decreed *thirty-nine* Articles of Faith; and these it declares to have decreed *for the taking away Difference of Opinion, and to establish an Agreement in true Religion**. The plain Language of *Authority*. These Articles it obliges all its Ministers to subscribe; and our *Princes*, as Heads and Governors of the Church, have authoritatively forbid its Clergy to preach any Thing repugnant to them, and required them to frame their Sermons according to *the Plan* here prescribed. From all which it appears, that, notwithstanding the *pretended Limitation*, there is a *real Authority* claimed by the Church, that is to say, by its *Governors*, to settle Points of Faith. But if there be *such Authority* really vested in them, then the People are bound to *submit* to their Decisions, and have no Right of private Judgment to *examine* or *reject* them; for there cannot be *two CONTRADICTORY Rights*; a *Right* in Governors to prescribe, and a *Right* in Subjects to refuse.—But if the *Church of England* has really this Authority and Right, the *Church of Rome* had it before her; and, as the elder and *Mother-church*, ought to have been obeyed. The *Reformation*, therefore, as we are wont to call it, was a Rebellion against Superiors, a Dis-

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obedience

* Preface to XXXIX Articles.

obedience to the Authority vested in *the Church*, and ought, as such, to be renounced by returning to the *Church of Rome*.

In this Manner, Sir, a *Romish Priest* will turn upon the *Church of England* its own dangerous Artillery; and by the meer Concessions of this XXth Article, thousands of Profelytes have, no doubt, been gained from you. Nor, with all your Ingenuity, would you find it easy to ward off the Force of such Arguing, should any of your Parishioners be likely to be seduced. And this, perhaps, is the Reason why the numerous Converts these Priests are said to make, are gathered *all from your Church*; whereas, from amongst the *Dis-senters*, you hardly ever hear of one gained. But,

SECONDLY. I want much to be enlightened as to THE PERSONS who are invested with *this Authority* and *Power*.

You say, it is *the Church*: But *Who*, I pray, are *the Church*, in whom this great *Power* is lodged? You will please to observe well, Sir, not the *Bishops* and *Clergy*, who are wont to speak of themselves as our *spiritual Pastors and Guides*, as being *over us in the Lord*, as *Stewards of the Mysteries*, &c. This *Power* to order the Manner of GOD's Worship, and to settle Articles of Faith, is *not* at all lodged in *them*, but entirely in the KING and PARLIAMENT of these Realms.

You need not be informed, Sir, that *all the Clergy* of this Kingdom, with *all the Bishops*, at their Head, have not the least *Authority* to enjoin one Ceremony or Rite of Worship; or to either *establish* or *annul* one Article of Faith. No, but *all Power* and Jurisdiction relating to these Matters is lodged chiefly in *Lay hands*; 'tis solely in the KING and PARLIAMENT, and *the Clergy* are to act in all Things under *their Direction* and Controul. The KING and PARLIAMENT
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are in Truth the real *Fathers, Governors, or BISHOPS* of this Church: *These ONLY* have Power to make or to unmake Forms and Rites of Worship, and do *authoritatively* instruct and prescribe to *the Clergy* what they are to believe—in what Manner, and to whom the Sacraments are to be given—what Prayers they are to offer up—what Doctrines to preach—who are to be admitted to the *Episcopate or Priesthood*, and who to be refused—by what Ceremonies, and Prayers, and Exhortations they are to be set apart, and consecrated to their Office.—These, with every other Circumstance relating to Religion and the Worship of God, which is *authoritatively* prescribed or enjoined in *your Church*, you know, Sir, not the *Bishops and Clergy*, but the KING with *his Parliament* are the *ONLY Persons* who have *authoritatively* enjoined and prescribed them.

“ The *Clergy* of the whole Land, in Convocation
 “ assembled, cannot so much as attempt any Canons
 “ or Constitutions without the King’s Licence. If
 “ the King and Clergy make a Canon, tho’ it binds
 “ the Clergy *in re ecclesiastica*, yet it does not bind
 “ Laymen*.”

Yea, so far, Sir, were the *Bishops and Clergy* from having any Hand in the first forming our present established

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* *Vide Examination of the Codex, &c. Pag. 114, 148.* “ By
 “ the 25th of Hen. VIII. Cap. 19. it is a *Premunire* for the
 “ Convocation to meet without the *King’s Writ*: And when they
 “ are met to do any thing without the *King’s Licence*: And then
 “ no Resolution of theirs to have the Force of a *Canon*, unless
 “ the *King* confirm it. Nor is it then valid, if it be contrariant
 “ or repugnant to the Laws, Statutes, and Customs of this Realm,
 “ or be to the Damage or Hurt of the *King’s Prerogative royal*.—
 “ And of this the Courts of *Westminster Hall* must judge.—
 “ *Hale*, in his *Analysis* (Page 12.) says, If ecclesiastical Laws are
 “ not confirmed by *Parliament*, the *King* may revoke and annul
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stablished Church, or in ordering its Rites and Articles of Faith, that it was done not only *without*, but in *actual Opposition* to them: "For in the 1st of Q. Eliz. the *Parliament alone* established the Queen's Supremacy and the Common-prayer-book, in spite of all Opposition from the *Bishops* in the House of Lords; and *the Convocation* then sitting, were so far from having any Hand in those Church-acts for Reformation, that they presented to the Parliament several Propositions in Behalf of the Tenets of *Popery*, directly contrary to the Proceedings of the Parliament *." —

Hence then, Sir, I think you must be absolutely forced to own (what I know Gentlemen of your Robe don't care to hear) *viz.* That the *Church of England* is really a *PARLIAMENTARY Church*; that it is not properly an *Ally*, but a mere *Creature* of the State. It depends entirely upon the *Acts* and *Authority* of *PARLIAMENT* for its very Essence and Frame. The Qualifications of its Ministers, their Power to officiate, the Manner in which they are to administer the Sacraments, are all limited and prescribed by *Authority of Parliament*, and this *Authority*, which at first made, can *alone* alter and new-make it; can abolish, or add to its Articles or Rites, according to its Pleasure, even tho' the whole Body of *Bishops* and *Clergy* ever so much dislike, or protest earnestly against it.

It is a Point therefore *incontestible*, and absolutely out of Doubt, that *THE CHURCH*, your Article declares to have *this Authority* and *Power* here, is the *KING and PARLIAMENT* of these Realms; and it is *no other* than they. But,

THIRDLY. The grand Point which yet sticks, and which, without your Assistance, I shall never get

* *Ide Priestcraft in Perfection*, Pref. Pag. 4.

get over, is, how came the *civil Magistrate* by this Authority in the *Church of CHRIST*? Who gave him this Power to decree Rites in Christian Worship, which *Christ* never decreed; and to make Articles of Faith which *Christ* never made? Neither *CHRIST*, nor the *Apostles*, ever gave him this Authority; whence then is it derived?

The *Subjection to higher Powers, and Obedience to Magistrates*, which the Scriptures enjoin *Christians*, relates only to *civil*, not at all to *religious* Matters: For this obvious Reason; that the *Magistrate* at that Time was every where *Pagan*. The *Apostles* therefore instead of paying, or exhorting *Christians* to pay, any Subjection to him in *religious Affairs*, strenuously exhorted them to renounce and disavow it—to come out from among them and be separate. They were every where, you know, Sir, *Dissenters* from the *established Church*.

CHRISTIANITY is so far from enjoining, that it actually forbids, Obedience to *civil Governors* in Things of a *religious* Nature. It commands us to call no Man upon Earth Father or Master*, *i. e.* to acknowledge no Authority or Jurisdiction of any in Matters of Religion, but to remember that ONE, one only is our Master and Law-giver, even *CHRIST*; and all *Christians* are Brethren; *i. e.* stand upon an equal foot, having no Dominion over one another. Tho' the Princes of the Gentiles exercise Dominion over them, and they who are Great exercise Authority upon them, yet it shall not, our LORD says, be so amongst you†. Nay, but your Church replies, in this its XXth Article, it shall be so amongst us.—There are some who have Authority over others in Matters of Faith.—There are other Masters besides *CHRIST*. Thus the Article and the Scripture manifestly clash: Will you be so good Sir, as to adjust the Controversy betwixt them, and tell me which I am to follow.

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* Matt. xxiii. 8, 9.

† Matt. xx. 25.

The Church is CHRIST's Kingdom, *a Kingdom not of this World*: For his voluntary Humiliation and suffering of Death, he is advanced to the high Honour of being *sole* Lawgiver, Judge and Sovereign in religious Matters.—*He* only hath Authority to fix the *Terms of Communion* for his Followers or Church; and the Terms which *He* hath fix'd, no Man upon Earth, nor Body of Men, have Authority to set aside, to alter or new make. And if any Men upon Earth shall presume to alter, or new make, *Terms of Communion* in his Church; they are guilty of great Arrogance, and invade his Authority and Throne. But this, we apprehend, is what *you* have done. You will not now receive a Person to publick Baptism or the Lord's-Supper upon *the Terms* on which CHRIST and *his Apostles* would have received him. Neither CHRIST nor *his Apostles* ever made the *Sign of the Cross*, or other *Sponsors* besides the Parents, necessary to a Child's Baptism; nor did they ever make *kneeling* a necessary Term of receiving the Sacramental-Supper; but both those *you* make necessary†. Thus you have taken upon you to *new model* the Church of CHRIST, to change and set aside *his* Laws, and to make *others* in their room.

Now give me leave to ask you, Sir, by what Authority do you presume to reject those from *your* Church, whom in your Conscience you believe CHRIST and *his Apostles* would have received into theirs? Are *you* wiser than *they*? Or is *your* Church better framed, and more perfect than *theirs*? If an honest and sincere Christian now brings his Child to

† The XXVIIth Canon requires, the Minister never wittingly to administer the Communion to any, but to such as kneel. The XXIXth Canon requires, that no Parent shall be urged to be present at his Child's Baptism; nor be admitted to answer as God-father for his own Child.

to you to be publickly baptized, desiring it may be done *without* the Sign of the Cross, and that *himself* may stand forth as *Surety* for its Education; would you not *refuse* him? Or if he desired to be admitted to the Communion of Christians, in the other Sacrament of the Supper, but that he might not take it *Kneeling*: Would you not *reject* him? But if the same Person had come to JESUS CHRIST or the *Apostles*, offering himself and Child upon the *same Terms*, would they not have *received* him? But how is it, Sir, that you take upon you to *reject* from CHRIST's Family and Church, those whom you believe HIMSELF would have *received*? Is not this *Lording it over* GOD's Heritage, and usurping CHRIST's Throne? Is it not setting yourselves up for *Law-Makers* and *Rulers* in his Kingdom; claiming Homage from *his* Subjects? And are not his *faithful* Subjects, by the Allegiance they owe HIM, obliged to enter their Protest against such Usurpation, and to *stand fast in the Liberty wherewith CHRIST has set them free*?

Where then, let me appeal to your own sober Judgment, does the *Guilt of Schism* lie: Upon you or upon us? Upon us, who offer our selves to Communion in your Church upon the *Terms* which CHRIST appointed, and are ready to do *every Thing* which CHRIST has commanded: Or upon you, who absolutely *reject* us, unless, besides what CHRIST hath order'd, we will submit also to some Orders and Devices of *your own*? We come as the *Lord's Servants*, and desire to eat at the *Lord's-Table*, with reverent Submission to all *his* Appointments. Nay but, say you, you shall not come to the *Lord's-Table*, unless you will *kneel*; *i. e.* unless you will come in that Posture, which tho' CHRIST in *his* Wisdom did not think proper, yet which we in *our* Wisdom have thought proper to *ordain*. In other Words; unless besides
being

being CHRIST's *Servants*, you will also be ours; and pay Subjection to *our* Institution and Authority in this religious Rite.

This, Sir, is the true State of the Controversy betwixt us : Judge now, I pray you, with the Impartiality of a *Christian*, who makes *the Schism*, and who has reason to fear *being brought into Judgment*, by the great *Law-giver* of the Church, for the unhappy Breach which subsists.—Let a great *Prelate* who at present adorns one of the highest Stations of *your Church* be heard as *Judge* betwixt us.—
 “ In all other Societies, the *express Will* of the
 “ *Founder*, and the Terms of Fellowship and Com-
 “ munion which *he* has laid down, are accounted
 “ *sacred*. In all other Kingdoms the *Will* of the
 “ *supreme Power* is a *Law*. No one pretends, or
 “ dares pretend, to make Laws of equal Force with
 “ his. How hard then is the Fate of the *Christian*
 “ *Church*, or of the *Kingdom of CHRIST*, when *his*
 “ *Will* is declared *insufficient*, and the *invented Words*
 “ and *Decisions* of his Subjects are made co-ordinate
 “ with his own, equally exclusive of others of his
 “ Subjects from the *Communion* of their Fellow-
 “ Subjects ! And how hard is the Fate of those
 “ *Believers* in *him*, who *desire Communion upon the*
 “ *Terms GOD has prescribed*, to be excluded by the
 “ *Words of Men*; by the *Inventions of Men*, im-
 “ posed upon them for *his Precepts* ! And how un-
 “ happy is the *Church*, to be reduced by any such
 “ *Methods within more narrow Bounds* than *our LORD*
 “ *himself has confined it* *.”

But you are in Readiness *to retort*, and with great Assurance tell me, “ That the *Avoidance* of Kneeling
 “ *insisted upon* by our Ministers, is not less an Im-
 position

* Bishop of Winchester's Postscript to his Answer to Dr. Hare's Sermon, page 254.

" position than your enjoining it.—That we do really
 " *impose* the Observance of *one particular Gesture* upon
 " our Communicants.—That *sitting* is the regular,
 " unvaried Practice of our Churches; observed as
 " constantly and universally amongst us, as *Kneeling*
 " is amongst you,—*never allowed* to be departed from;
 " which our Ministers *require, insist upon, and refuse*
 " *to abate.*"——And you ask me " if one should pre-
 " sent himself to take the Sacrament standing, or
 " offer to take it on his Knees, whether I don't
 " think he would undergo some severe Expostulati-
 " ons, and be plainly told, we had *no such Custom,*
 " *nor the Churches of God,* and it would not be
 " given him at all †."

I believe the World will be surprized, Sir, and
 that an *ingenuous Blush* will cover your own Face,
 when you find that this Account of us is absolute-
 ly without Truth, and quite contrary to Fact. I
 have spent my whole Life amongst *the Dissenters*,
 and am acquainted with a great Number of their
 Churches and Ministers; but never once, till now,
 heard that *SITTING* at the Lord's-Table was ever
insisted on as a Term of Communion with them; or
 that it is their *unvaried* and *universal* Practice. The
 contrary to this, I know to be Truth. In the Church
 to which I myself belong, there is a Person who for
 many Years has constantly received *KNEELING*, with-
 out the least Offence to the Congregation, or any
 Expostulation from the Minister on that Account.
 In some of our Churches, I am well informed, there
 are some who receive *Standing*, some *Kneeling*: In
 this every one amongst us is left entirely at his Li-
 berty. Tho' the Posture of *Sitting* be generally
 thought by us most suitable to the *Commemorative-*
Supper of our LORD; instituted instead of the *Paschal-*
 C *Supper*

† Letter II. pag. 56, 57, 58. Letter III. pag. 8, 9.

Supper of the Jews; and most agreeable to the Practice of CHRIST and *his Apostles*, who, without all peradventure, *Sat* around the Table; yet in this we are all left to follow freely our own Persuasion. Nor is there, I believe, amongst our Ministers one in five hundred, who would refuse to give the Sacrament either *Standing* or *Kneeling* to any one who thought either of *these* the fittest Posture of receiving. Our Liberty as to this Matter you might have seen in *Baxter's reform'd Liturgy*; where it is expressly said—"And let none of the People be forced to sit, stand or kneel in the Act of receiving, whose Judgment is against it." And in Dr. *Calamy's* brief Account, &c. which you appear to have read—"The Communicants amongst Protestant Dissenters, are AT LIBERTY to use THEIR OWN POSTURE in the Time of Receiving; tho' a Table Gesture is most commonly used †."

Thus, Sir, I have at large considered your Charge of SCHISM upon the Dissenters; and hope by this time you begin to think more favourably of us; and to justify our Principles as truly catholic and generous; the only Broad-Bottom on which the Peace of the Church can be solidly fixed; and that the Guilt of the Separation lies wholly on your Church, which insists upon UNCHRISTIAN and UNSCRIPTURAL Terms of communicating with it.

But I hope to finish your Conviction, Sir, and to wipe off every Speck of the Taint of Schism from Dissenters, by calling to your Remembrance your own excellent Definition of the Catholic or Christian Church; and reasoning with you on it. "The Catholic Church, you say *, is one outward and visible Society DIVINELY instituted; the most admirable and glorious Society under Heaven."—Mind, Sir, your own Words;

† Letter to a Divine in Germany, pag. 11.

* Letter I. pag. 73.

Words; and it will soon end the Debate. If it be a *Society* **DIVINELY** *instituted*, then whatever *Society* is not of *Divine*, but of *meerly human* Institution, is not the *Church of Christ*. If it be a *Society* *divinely instituted*, then the *Terms of Admission* into this *Society*, and the *Qualifications* of its *Members* are *divinely fixed*, i. e. fixed by the *Will and Authority of God*: Whatever *visible Society* then hath its *Terms of Admission* and the *Qualifications* of its *Members* **NOT** *divinely fix'd*, fix'd only by the *Will and Authority of Men*, cannot be the truly *Catholic and Christian Church*.

Now here shall I intreat you, Sir, with the Impartiality of a *Christian*, who has nothing but *Truth* and the *Will of God* in view, to stop a Moment and compare the *CONSTITUTION* of the *Church of England*, and the *CONSTITUTION* of the *Church of Christ*, and see if they are not *Societies* of a quite *different Frame*; the one a *human*, the other a *divine* Institution; the one resting entirely on the *Authority and Will of Men*, the other upon the *Will and Authority of GOD*.

If you enquire after the *Constitution and Frame* of the *Church of Christ*, where must you look for it? only in the *Bible**. But if you enquire after the *Constitution and Frame* of the *Church of England*, where must you look for that? in the *Statute-book*, in the *Canons*, and *Common-prayer-book*, and in the *Codes* of the *English-law*.

The *Church of CHRIST* is a *religious Establishment*, founded upon the *Scriptures*, as the only authentic *Rule* of its *Doctrines and Worship*; the *Church of ENGLAND* is a *civil Establishment*, founded upon *Acts of Parliament*, as the only authentic *Rule* of what is to be believed and practised therein. The one a *spiritual Structure*, built upon the *Foundation* of the *Apostles and Prophets*, *JESUS CHRIST* himself being the

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chief

* The Bible only is the Religion of Protestants. *Chillingworth*.

chief Corner-stone : The other a *political Structure*, built upon the Foundation of the Lords and Commons of the Realm, **THE KING**, as supreme Head, being the chief Corner-stone.

Into the *Church of Christ* any Person may be admitted, who submits to *the Terms* appointed by *Christ*: But, into the *Church of England*, he cannot be admitted, except over and above *these*, he submits also to *Terms* which *human Authority* hath instituted and devised.

In *Christ's Church* the Lord's-supper is appointed and used **ONLY** for *spiritual and religious Ends*; but, in the *Church of England*, it is notoriously both instituted and used for *political and worldly Ends*, to qualify for a Post. In the *former* 'twas appointed with Intention, and as *a mean* of uniting all Christians; and of destroying all Variance and Distinctions betwixt them. In the *latter* 'tis appointed with Intention, and as *a Mean*, of *discriminating* and *dividing* Christians; and of making a *Distinction* betwixt one and another.

In the *Christian Church*, no openly debauched or scandalously wicked Person has a *Right* to come to the Table of the Lord, or to partake ~~of~~ its Provisions; but in the *Church of England*, if such a Person has a Commission from the King in the Army or the Fleet, or any profitable Post, this gives him *a Right* to come to the Communion-Table, *a Right* to demand the holy Elements at the *Priest's Hands*, as a Qualification for his Post.

In the *scriptural Church* of Christ, there are no such Officers ever heard of as *Archbishops, Deans, Archdeacons, Prebendaries, Canons, Chancellors, &c.*—But there is *another Church*, you know, Sir, where *these* are Officers of great Influence, of high Importance and Rank. But whence came this pompous Train! From the *apostolic Fountain* at *Jerusalem*, or from the *corrupted Source* at *Rome*? The

The Church of Christ never excommunicates, nor pretends to exercise its Discipline upon any but its own Members; *For what have I to do, the Apostle says, to judge them that are without *?* But the Church of England extends its ecclesiastical Authority over those who *never* belonged to it; and by a very extraordinary Act of Power, *excommunicates* such as *never were* of its Communion; that is, it casts such *from*, who never were *in* it. In common Life such a Thing would be reckoned *marvellous* indeed. Should I solemnly threaten, yea actually proceed to cast a Person out of my House, who never was *in* it, I should work as great a Miracle as was ever wrought in the Church of Rome: But Miracles of this kind, Sir, your Church, you know, sometimes works.

Again; the Rod with which the Church of Christ chastises its Delinquents is *spiritual*, not *carnal*; but the Rod of the Church of England is *carnal*, not *spiritual*. By the Constitution of the former, the excommunicated Member is only to be deprived of *spiritual* Privileges, such as Fellowship in Prayer, Singing, Sacraments, &c. As for his civil Property and Rights, it meddles not with these; *for CHRIST's Kingdom is not of this World*; but by the Constitution of the latter, the excommunicated Member is delivered over to the *civil Arm*, to humble and chastise him; he is disabled from asserting his natural Rights, from being a Witness, from bringing Actions at Law, and if he does not submit in *forty Days*, a Writ shall issue forth to *imprison him*.—

In the Church of Jesus Christ, those who are entrusted with ecclesiastical Discipline are, solemnly charged before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect Angels, to be no Respecters of Persons, to do nothing by Partiality, and not to prefer one before another†: Neither

* 1 Cor. v. 12.

† 1 Tim. v. 21.

Neither *the Gold Ring* nor *the gay Cloathing**, nor pecuniary Gifts, are to have any Influence upon their *ecclesiastical Proceedings*; but the Poor are to receive the same Measure with the Rich. But is it thus, Sir, in the *Church of England*? May not a grievous Sinner, according to her Constitution, be suffered to *commute*? to have Pardon for Money, and to skreen himself by a round Fee from the Stroke of the Church's Rod? Yea, when he is going to be delivered, or actually is delivered, into the Hands of *the Devil*, and *Satan* has him in his Keeping, will not an *handsome Sum* presently pluck him thence, and restore him to the Church's soft and indulgent Bosom again? — You remember, Sir, the Heathen Satyrist,

————— *At vos*

Dicite Pontifices, in Sacris quid facit Aurum.

Perfius Sat. II.

And you know what was said, upon a like Occasion, by a much greater than he — *Thy Money perish with thee ; because thou hast thought that the Gift of God (Pardon and Absolution) may be purchased with Money, thou hast neither Part nor Lot in this Matter* †.

Some of the most sacred Acts of spiritual Jurisdiction, its solemn Censures and Excommunications, are exercised in the Church of England by *unconsecrated* and meer *Laymen*. These hold the *Keys*, open or shut, cast out or admit to it, according to their sole Pleasure. The *Chancellors, Officials, Surrogates*—— who administer the Jurisdiction of spiritual Courts, and determine the most important spiritual Matters, such as *delivering Men to the Devil*, &c. frequently are, and by express Provision of Law, *always* may be *Laymen*. And truly, Sir, I greatly pity you Gentlemen of the *Clergy*, that some of the most tremendous and solemn Parts of your *sacred Office*, such as *Excommunications, Absolutions*, &c. you are forced to perform,

* James ii. 2, 3.

† Acts viii. 20, 21.

perform, not according to, but sometimes, perhaps, directly against your own Judgments, as you are *authoritatively* directed and commanded by these *Lay-persons*. Forced, I say, to do it, notwithstanding what you urge about *your own Concurrence*; for if you refuse to concur, you are immediately liable to *Suspension ab officio & beneficio*; and if you continue obstinate, to be *excommunicated* your own selves †.

The Church of JESUS CHRIST never owed its Support (it scorned to owe its Propagation and Support) to the Powers, Preferments and Riches of this World; 'twas its Glory, that it made its Way, and was established upon Earth, not only *without*, but in *direct Opposition* to them: It commands its Ministers *not to STRIVE, but to be gentle to all Men; in Meekness, instructing those who gainsay*—(2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.) But the Church of England, conscious of its Weakness, props itself on every Side with *civil Dignities and Emoluments*; calls in the Powers and Riches of *this World* to its Support and Defence; intrenches itself deep under Shelter of *penal Laws*, and from thence thunders out its *Excommunications*, and Threats of *Fines*, and *Imprisonments*, upon any who shall dare to write or speak any thing derogatory to its Ceremonies and Forms of Worship, or its Articles of Faith*.

There is one Difficulty more, Sir, which I have often revolved, but could never possibly get over;
it

† There is one Thing, says Bishop Burnet, yet wanting to compleat the Reformation of the Church; which is to restore primitive Discipline against scandalous Persons, the establishing the Government of the Church in *Ecclesiastical Hands*, and taking it out of *Lay-Hands*, which have so long prophaned it; and have exposed the Authority of the Church and the Censures of it, chiefly *Excommunication*, to the Contempt of the Nation; so that the dreadfullest of all Censures, is now become the most scorned and despised.——*Hist. Reform. Abridg. Pag. 367.*

* The IV, V, VIth *Canons* solemnly denounce——“That who-
“soever shall affirm that the Form of GOD's Worship contained

it seems to hang as a *dead and insuperable* Weight upon the Frame of your Church; if you can hand-
somely remove it, you will merit *Lambeth* for a Re-
ward.

The Church of England and the Church of Christ seem to be two Societies, absolutely distinct, and of a quite different Constitution, as they have two different HEADS, or FOUNTAINS of Power, whence all Authority, Jurisdiction, and Ministrations in the two Churches severally spring. In the Church of Jesus Christ, HIMSELF is *supreme Head*, the only Law-giver and Sovereign: *To us there is but ONE Lord**. ONE is your Master, even CHRIST †. Gave him to be HEAD over all Things to the Church ‡. ALL POWER is given to ME, in Heaven, and in Earth, go ye therefore teach all Nations||. CHRIST is the ONLY Fountain of Influence, Jurisdiction, and Power in his Church, by Commission from whom alone all its Officers act.

But in the Church of England, you well know, Sir, the King or Queen is SUPREME HEAD, “vested
“ with all Power to exercise all Manner of Ecclesi-
“ astical Jurisdiction, and Archbishops, Bishops, Arch-
“ deacons, and other Ecclesiastical Persons, have no
“ Manner of Jurisdiction ecclesiastical, but by and un-
“ der the KING’s Majesty, who hath full Power and
“ Authority

“ in the Common-prayer, hath any Thing in it repugnant to the
“ Word of God—or that any of the XXXIX Articles are in any
“ Part erroneous, or such as may not with a good Conscience be
“ subscribed, let him be EXCOMMUNICATED *ipso facto*, and
“ not be restored until he repent and publicly revoke his wicked
“ Errors.”

And by the Act of Uniformity, it is enacted—“That if any one
“ shall declare, or speak any Thing in the Derogation or depray-
“ ing of the Book of Common-prayer, he shall, for the first Offence,
“ suffer Imprisonment one whole Year, without Bail or Mainprize;
“ and for the second Offence shall be imprisoned during his Life.”

* 1 Cor. viii. 6.

† Matt. xxiii. 8.

‡ Ephes. i. 22.

|| Matt. xxviii. 18, 19.

“ Authority to hear and determine *all Manner* of Causes
 “ ecclesiastical, and to reform, and correct *all Vice*,
 “ Sin, Errors, Heresies, Enormities, Abuses whatsoever,
 “ which by *any Manner* of spiritual Authority or Juris-
 “ diction ought, or may be lawfully reformed *.”—

At the first Establishment of this Church under
Hen. VIII. and *Edw. VI.* all the *Bishops* took out
 Commissions from *the Crown*, for the exercising of
 their *spiritual Jurisdiction* in these Kingdoms, during the
King's Pleasure only; “ and in their Commissions ac-
 “ knowledge all sort of Jurisdiction, as well ecclesiasti-
 “ cal as civil, to have flowed originally from the *REGAL*
 “ *Power*, as from a *supreme Head*, and a *Fountain* and
 “ *Spring* of all Magistracy within his own Kingdom†.”

Yea, even the *Power of Ordination* itself, which is
 reckoned a *Peculiar* of the episcopal Office, the first
 Reformers and Founders of this Church derived from
 the KING, and exercised only as by Authority from
 him, and during his Pleasure. “ Thus *Cranmer* Arch-
 “ bishop of *Canterbury*, *Bonner* Bishop of *London*, &c.
 “ took out Commissions from *the Crown*, import-
 “ ing, that because the Vicegerent (*Cromwel*, a Lay-
 “ person) could not personally attend the Charge in
 “ all Parts of the Kingdom, *the KING* authorises *the*
 “ *Bishop* in his (the *King's*) Stead, to ordain, within his
 “ Diocese, such as he judged worthy of holy Orders;
 “ to collate to Benefices; to give Institution; and to
 “ execute all other Parts of the Episcopal Authority;
 “ and this during the *King's* Pleasure only ‡.”

In consequence of this SUPREMACY, the KING
 or QUEEN of *this Church* hath Power to excom-
 municate from, or to re-admit into it, independent
 of, yea, in direct Opposition to, all its *Bishops* and
Clergy. The KING or QUEEN, revoke, if they please,

D

any

* 26 *Hen. VIII.* Cap. i. 37 *Hen. VIII.* Cap. xvii. 1 *Eliz.*
 Cap. i.

† *Burnet's Hist. Reform.* Part II. Col. p. 91.

‡ *Vid. Examination of the Codex Juris, &c.* Pag. 32, 33.

any spiritual Censures of the *Bishops* or *Archbishops*; yea can suspend, deprive, or even excommunicate, themselves or can, by their Proclamation only, without the least Confession, Humiliation, or Satisfaction for their Offence, pardon and restore *excommunicated Persons*, the vilest Offenders, to the Church's Bosom again †.

Yea, further; they have Power to forbid all Preaching for a Time; as did K. *Hen. VIII.* K. *Edw. VI.* Q. *Mary*, Q. *Eliz.*—to limit, instruct, and prescribe to the *Clergy* what they shall, and what they shall not preach; as did Q. *Eliz.* K. *James I.* K. *Charles I.* K. *William*, &c.—Finally, to the *King* or *Queen* ONLY does it pertain to declare *what is* HERESY, and *authoritatively* to pronounce what *Doctrines* and *Tenets* are, and what are not; to be censured as such: Nor have all the *Bishops* and *Clergy*, assembled in Convocation, the least Authority to censure any *Tenets* as *heretical*, if the PRINCE on the Throne refuse his Consent.

Now here, Sir, I am pressed with an *insuperable Difficulty* how to reconcile this Constitution of the *Church of England* with the Constitution of the *Church of Christ*. Are they not most indisputably *two different Societies*, subject to *two different*, sometimes *opposite*, Authorities, animated and governed by *two different Heads*? In *CHRIST'S Church*, HIMSELF is the *only* Sovereign and Head; HE only hath Power to decree Ceremonies and Rites, to fix Terms of Communion and Authority in Points of Faith: Nor hath any *earthly Prince* Power to make Laws in his Kingdom, which shall bind the Consciences of his Subjects; or sovereignly to dictate to his Servants and Ministers what they shall believe, and what they shall preach. Yea, his Subjects are expressly commanded and charged to receive nothing as *Doctrine* or *Parts of Religion*, which are only *Commandments of Men* *.

But

† A Parson was deprived for Adultery; afterwards a general Pardon came, which pardoned the Adultery. It was adjudged that the Parson was *ipso facto*, restored to his Benefice, *Coke 6 Rep. 13.*

* *Matt. xv. 9.*

But in the *Church of England* there is ANOTHER Sovereign, Law-giver, SUPREME HEAD besides JESUS CHRIST; an *Authority* which commands Things which CHRIST never commanded, which teaches Doctrines HE never taught, which enjoins Terms of Communion, and Rites of religious Worship, which CHRIST never enjoined.—What now can I judge, Sir! What do you yourself judge! but that the *two Churches* are two distinct and quite different Societies (for in *one* and *the same* Society, surely there cannot be two *Supreme Heads*) that they are framed after different Models, consist of different Members, are governed by different Officers, Statutes, and Laws.—Consequently, my SEPARATION or DISSENT from *the one*, does, by no Means infer my SEPARATION from *the other*. Yea, what am I to judge but that by the Allegiance I owe to CHRIST my ONLY *supreme Head* and King in spiritual Matters, I am obliged to enter my Protest against the Pretensions and Claims of any OTHER *supreme Head*. For, can a Man serve two Masters? Can he be subject at the same Time to two *supreme Heads*? Can he be faithful to CHRIST, the only KING in the Church, and yet acknowledge ANOTHER King, as a Fountain of all Magistracy and Power therein? Surely he cannot.

Permit me, good Sir, to exercise your Patience a Moment or two more upon this remarkable Contrast, and I will dismiss the ungrateful Subject.

By the Constitution of the *Church of Christ*, 'tis expressly ordered and declared—That *the WOMAN shall not be suffered publickly to teach, nor to usurp Authority over the Man*†. But by the Constitution of the *Church of England*, the WOMAN is permitted *publickly to teach*, yea, to limit and controul in *spiritual* and *religious* Matters, and authoritatively to INSTRUCT all the *Bishops*, and *Clergy*, and *Men* in the Land. Thus did Queen Elizabeth, thus did Queen Anne, and thus hath every Queen Authority to do that sits upon our Throne; Au-

† 1 Tim. ii. 12.

thority to *prescribe* and *dictate* to all, both Ministers and People, what the one are to preach, and the other to receive. And was it not, Sir, a very comely and edifying Sight, to behold the two Houses of Convocation waiting upon the good Q. (*Anne* *) in the Case of *Whiston's* Books upon the Trinity, to be *instructed* by her Majesty whether they were to be condemned as *heretical*, or not? that venerable and learned Body had solemnly decreed them to be *dangerous* and *heretical*; but this their *Censure* was of no Force, till they had laid it before *the Queen*, to have her Judgment upon the Point. Upon her Majesty's Determination it *entirely* depended, whether *Whiston's* Tenets were to be *rejected* by the *Church of England* as erroneous, or not. Her Majesty, in this Case, was of a *different* Opinion from her two Houses of Convocation; she thought not fit to censure the Books: So her *single* Opinion, strange to relate! her *single* Opinion carries it against that of *her Bishops* and *Clergy*. She over-rules and sets aside all their Proceedings, *restrains* and *counteracts* them in one of the very chiet of their *pastoral* Functions, the guarding against Errors and Heresies in the Church.

Behold here, Sir, A WOMAN exercising spiritual ecclesiastical Authority over *the Man*! Yea, behold *the Representative* of the Clergy of the whole Land, a most learned, grave and venerable Body, waiting upon A WOMAN to learn from her Mouth, what *the Church* is to believe, and what to reject, as to this great *Mystery of Faith*: Upon A WOMAN, who could be supposed to know as little of this Matter as of the Motion of the Stars; yet, by her *sole* Determination, (I repeat it with Astonishment, and you hear it, no doubt, with Perplexity and Grief) *your Church* was uncontrollably and authoritatively directed in this deep and mysterious Point.

I ask you, Sir, in the *Name of GOD*, Is *this* the Constitution and Frame of the *Church of CHRIST*? Is it not

* Anno 1711.

a *Constitution* of a quite different Nature ; a Society not DIVINELY, but *humanly* instituted ; and therefore, by your own Definition, NOT the *Church of Christ* ? And may not, think you, a Person separate peaceably from it, without any the least Danger of thereby separating himself from the one scriptural, apostolic, and catholic Church ?

When you stript the *Pope* of his SUPREMACY, and gave it to our *Princes*, you should have taken Care not to have left his INFALLIBILITY behind. An *infallible Head* and Director of the *Church*, be it *Woman* or *Man*, be it an *He* or a *She-bishop*, is a Thing plausible enough, and carries a good Face : But, to lodge the absolute Direction of the *Consciences*, the *Faith* and the *Discipline* of the Church with a *fallible Head* ! to give a *Prince*, yea a *LADY* bred up in all the Softnesses and Diversions of a Court, an uncontrollable Dominion over the religious Conduct both of Clergy and Laity, authoritatively to direct what *those* are to preach, and what *these* to believe as the *Doctrine of CHRIST* ! to make *HER* the sole Judge in all Controversies which shall arise upon any the most mysterious and inexplicable Points ; so that *all the Priests* are to ask knowledge at *HER Lips* ; and whatever *SHE* determines is to be received by the Church as *Christian Verity* and *Truth* ! This is such a *Constitution* as quite shocks the Understanding, and comes not a whit behind *Transubstantiation* itself. Hence, doubtless, Sir, the Triumphs of *Popish Priests* over you ! Hence their Inroads upon you, and the thousands they are continually carrying captive from your Tents ! And hence the sad Increase, and the Insults of *Deists*, who taking the Scheme of the *Church of England* to be that of the *Christian Church*, are authorised by common Sense, they think, not only to reject, but to treat it with Contempt !

And now, Sir, having so largely discussed this Point, I presume you are convinced, “ *That this same peaceable Separation*

“ *Separation of ours is not, what you call it, a Piece of*
 “ *arrant Nonsense and Contradiction ;*” and that you will
 cease to be so displeased at our treating your grave Lec-
 tures upon the heinous Sin of SCHISM, as *solemn Cant*
 and *Ecclesiastical Scare-crows*. You see, likewise, how
 extremely unapt, and quite wide of the Point, are the
two Instances you bring to illustrate our Case, viz “ of
 “ a Wife separating from the Bed and Board of her
 “ Husband—Or of two or three Counties disliking a
 “ monarchical Government, and throwing off their Al-
 “ legiance to the King *”. Has the *Church of England*,
 Sir, any such Power or Authority over *us Dissenters*, as
 the Husband has over the Wife ? Pray who gave it that
 Authority ? Have we ever plighted it our Troth ? or
 bound ourselves by a solemn Vow to honour and obey
 it to the End of our Life ?—Or have we ever sworn
 Allegiance to it ; or do we owe it any Homage ; as *the*
Counties have sworn and do owe to *the King* ?

Amongst the *peculiar Excellencies* of *your Church* you
 reckon “ *The Use of the three Creeds in publick Wor-*
 “ *ship ; as one of the most effectual and powerful*
 “ *Means both for teaching and preserving the Chris-*
 “ *tian Faith entire and uncorrupt, which we have not*
 “ *in our Churches †.*” The *Creed* called *the Apostles*,
 we have in constant use amongst us : And as for the *two*
other, especially the *Athanasian*, we are content you
 should have the Honour of its being *peculiar* to your-
 selves. But methinks, Sir, it should a little check your
 Triumph over us here, to remember, that some of the
 wisest and most illustrious Members of your Church,
 both Clergy and Laity, account the Use of *this Creed*
 your great Sin and Reproach, and with A. B. Tillot-
 son, *wish you were well rid of it.*

What are you, Sir, amongst the *weak and uncharita-*
ble Minds who *damn to the Pit of Hell* all who cannot re-
 ceive all the dark and *mysterious Points* set forth in that
 Creed !

* Let. I. Page 72.

† Lett. I. Pag. 15.

Creed! Do you in your Conscience think that there is NO SALVATION for those who do not faithfully believe the several Articles it contains; and that whosoever doth not keep whole and undefiled the Faith therein deliver'd, he shall WITHOUT DOUBT perish everlastingly? What! the many great and worthy Persons, bright Ornaments of your own Church, who instead of keeping it whole and undefiled, have openly disavow'd, preach'd and wrote against it, dying in this Disbelief, have they without peradventure everlastingly perish'd? Alas! for the good Doctors Clarke, Whitby, Burnet, &c.——For the illustrious Sir Isaac, &c. &c. Yea, alas! for the whole Greek Church who have strenuously rejected the Article of the *Filioq*; —They are gone down, it seems, to the *infernal Pit*! And notwithstanding their great Knowledge and Piety in this World, are, for not believing the *Athanasian Creed*, sunk into EVERLASTING DARKNESS and DAMNATION in the other! Do you wonder *Deism* prevails, if this be genuine *Christianity*?

'Tis a Fact, I presume, indisputable, that a great Part of the most learned and virtuous of your Clergy are departed from the *Athanasian Doctrine*; and that those of them who are not, do by no means think its Belief absolutely and indispensably necessary to Salvation. What now must a *Deist* think, when he hears both the one and the other thirteen Times a Year, most solemnly declaring in the Presence of Almighty God, and as Instructors of his People, that whoever will be saved, it is before all Things necessary that he hold the *ATHANASIAN Faith*; and most peremptorily denouncing EVERLASTING DAMNATION upon those who do not believe it; that is, many of them denouncing DAMNATION upon themselves!——Is this your “powerful” and effectual Means of preserving the *Christian Faith*?——I should think it one of the most effectual to subvert and destroy it. It has no doubt, been in fact a great stumbling-block in the Way of Infidels and Jews,
and

and harden'd them in their Opposition to the *Religion of CHRIST*, when they see it dooming to *undoubted and everlasting* Perdition all who do not heartily and sincerely believe (for that must be meant by *faithfully*) these deep and mysterious Points, which we acknowledge to be inexplicable, and far above the Powers of Reason to comprehend.

“ But the Dissenting Ministers, you tell me, who
 “ have complied with the Terms of the Toleration,
 “ have solemnly subscribed *the VIIIth Article* which
 “ approves the *Athanasian Creed* *.” Let Dr. Calamy answer †. “ The dissenting Ministers about the City,
 “ in a Body, gave in their Sense of the Articles when
 “ they subscribed them, and among the rest of this
 “ VIIIth Article, in the Gloss upon which, the *dam-
 “ natory Clauses* of this Creed are expressly *excluded*
 “ the Subscription. — And there was something of the
 “ same Nature done in several Parts of the Country.”
 Now the Fathers and Predecessors of the present dissenting Ministers having made this *public* Protest and Declaration at their Subscription, and the *Legislature* having accepted, or at least not rejected it; under the Favour of *this Protest* their Successors may be supposed now to subscribe with the *same Disapprobation* of the *damnatory Clause*. If it were not to be thus taken, there is, I hope, not a Minister among us but would publickly disown and renounce his Subscription.

I should now proceed, Sir, to the Examination of other Parts of your Letters, to shew the great *Insufficiency* of your Arguments and Objections; and to observe that, in many Instances, you have extremely mistaken and given quite wrong Representations of our religious Principles and Practice. — But I relieve your Patience at present. — If this Province be undertaken by no other Hand, you may in some Time, by divine Permission, expect to hear farther from,

Sir,

Your very humble Servant,

A DISSENTER.

* Appendix, Page 78.

† Life of Mr. Baxter, Page 236.

